

REMARKS

In the Official Action of August 12, 2005, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, and 14 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103 in view of Japanese Published Patent Application No. 2002-229646 (cited by the Examiner as “Katsunori”) and U.S. Patent No. 6,252,519 (“McKenna”). Claims 3, 5, 15, 16, and 17 were rejected in view of Katsunori, McKenna, and U.S. Patent No. 5,572,201 (“Graham”).

The Examiner rejected claims 6, 18, 24 and 29 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 103 in view of Katsunori, McKenna and U.S. Patent No. 3,941,201 (“Hermann”). Claims 23, 25, 28 and 30 were rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 103 in view of Katsunori and Hermann. Claims 26-27 and 31 were rejected in view of Katsunori, Hermann, and Graham.

In addressing claims 6 and 18, the Examiner stated that the Hermann patent disclosed the accommodating of vehicles that approach from different directions. The Hermann patent discloses the merging of two lanes of traffic, not the situation in which two vehicles approach a portion of a narrow road that cannot accommodate two directions of traffic and in which the first vehicle wishes to travel from a first end to a second end while the second vehicle wishes to travel from the second to the first.

In order to expedite allowance, features of claims 6 and 18 have been clarified and incorporated into the independent claims (claims 1, 14, 23, and 28). In particular, the independent claims now include a request to enter a narrow road segment with a first end and a second end and which lacks sufficient width to accommodate two directions of traffic. The claims further require that the first vehicle seeks to travel from the first end to the second end and the second vehicle seeks to travel from the second end to the first end. The term “road segment” has been utilized to clarify that this element is met even if only a portion of a route is limited in width, not the entire path of any given road.

In light of the cancellation of claims 6 and 18 and amendments to claims 1, 14, 23, and 28, Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's Claim Objections are now moot.

Applicant believes that all of the pending claims are patentable. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner grant early allowance of this application. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney via telephone if such communication would expedite this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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